**Source Analysis:**

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| **Herodotus: Book 7, 2-4**  Both expeditions were ready to start when a violent quarrel broke out between Darius’ sons on the question of priority and succession; for according to Persian law the king may not march with his army until he has named his successor. Darius before his accession had three sons by former wife, Gobryas’ daughters, and four more after his accession by Atossa the daughter of Cryrus. The eldest of the first three was Artabanzes, and of the last four Xerxes. It was between these two, therefore, being sons of different mothers, that the dispute arose, Artabanzanes basing his claim to the succession on the arguments that he was the eldest of all Darius’ sons and therefore, by universal custom, entitled to inherit his father’s position, Xerxes urging in reply that he was the son of Atossa the daughter of Cyrus, who won the Persians their freedom. Darius had not yet declared his mind, Demaratus the son of Ariston arrived in Susa, after being deposed as king of Sparta and having gone into voluntary exile, and the story goes that when he heard about the dispute between Darius’s sons, he went to see Xerxes advised him to point out, in addition to the arguments he was already using, that Darius was already on the throne of Persia when he was born, whereas Artabanszes was born before his farther held any public officer at all. It was therefore neither reasonable not fair that the crown should pass to anyone but Xerxes… personally, I believe that even without this advice from Demaratus, Xerxes would have become king, because of the immense power of Atossa.  Xerxes, then, was publicly proclaimed as next in succession to the crown, and Darius was free to turn his attention to the war. |

As a class we will go through this and analyse the source together. You will need to write down responses to the following questions based on the class discussion.

* Summarise the event of Xerxes’ succession.
* What was the major issue with Xerxes’ succession?
* Do you have any cause to doubt Herodotus’ story?
* Are there any flaws (bias, opinion, agenda etc.) to his writing?

* How is Darius, and his son Xerxes described by Herodotus? What does this tell us?

**Archaeological evidence:**

Relief from the northern stairs: Darius with Xerxes behind him



In pairs, attempt to analyse this source, figuring out as much information as possible:

* Describe what you see
* How many people are carved into the relief?
* What can you figure out from how the people are dressed?
* What does the positioning of people tell us?
* Who is on the throne, Darius or Xerxes?
* Who do you think would have created this relief? Why?
* What does this relief show us about Persian Kings?

**Source 3: Darius’ and Xerxes’ tomb**

 

Attempt to analyse these two tombs yourself. Try and ask yourself as many questions similar to the ones asked in the previous source analysis. Try and sum up what these two tombs tell us about the succession or Xerxes.

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